

**CALGARY POVERTY REDUCTION INITIATIVE JUSTICE SECTOR CONSTELLATION**  
**SYNOPSIS UPDATE**  
**NOVEMBER 17, 2014**

The original mandate of the Justice Sector Constellation was to make recommendations to the Calgary Poverty Reduction Initiative Secretariat on a poverty-reduction strategy in the context of the legal system. The Constellation started by identifying the issues within the legal system faced by those with low income and the access to justice issues faced by such people. The Constellation then developed goals, objectives and strategies with a view to addressing those issues. This work was conducted over a ten-month period, and culminated in the release of the Constellation's report dated March 19, 2013, which is entitled "Intervening at the Intersection of Poverty and the Legal System" (see at <http://www.enoughforall.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Justice-Sector-Constellation-Final-Report.pdf>).

Over 90 percent of the recommendations developed by the Constellation had previously been made, directly or indirectly, in other reports regarding the legal system and the justice sector. Perhaps for that reason, the members of the Constellation agreed to continue to work together on implementing the Constellation's recommendations, despite having completed their original mandate. As a result, the CPRI has recognized the Constellation as one of the implementation teams for the CPRI's poverty-reduction strategy.

The recommendations developed by the Constellation were consolidated into three categories: education, service enhancement, and systemic change. Of the 52 recommendations made by the Constellation, the Constellation is actively working on implementing a number of these. The Constellation's main focus is currently on three projects:

1. Service Provider Capacity Building project: The goal of this project is to increase awareness by service providers of potential legal issues as part of client needs, and increase awareness of and referral to appropriate justice sector services and resources. The Constellation has received funding to develop and pilot training for service providers and intermediaries (e.g., community and faith community workers and volunteers) to recognize the legal issues of clients and know where to refer clients for assistance.
2. Database project: The goal of this project is to develop a comprehensive database of justice sector service providers and justice sector services, using existing databases as a starting point. The Constellation has identified three existing justice sector service provider databases in varying states of completeness and currency, and has brought together the relevant stakeholders to explore the possibility of integrating them into one database that will be kept current over time. The resulting database would be a resource to both the public and service providers.
3. Legal Advice versus Legal Information project: The goal of this project is to educate justice sector service providers on the difference between legal advice and legal information, so as to encourage them to provide as much legal information as possible.

In addition, the Constellation is advancing other recommendations by:

1. making connections with institutions that educate justice sector service providers such as lawyers, police officers and correctional officials, to educate the justice sector regarding vulnerability to legal issues, poverty and the need for poverty law lawyers;
2. connecting with housing and other service providers to collaborate with them in developing a coordinated integration plan for those released from custody; and
3. increasing collaboration both among organizations within the Constellation and between the Constellation and other service providers.